

# CAITLIN PRESS

WHERE URBAN MEETS RURAL  
& HOME OF DAGGER EDITIONS

## FALL 2024

*FEATURING*

**LOU ALLISON & JANE WILDE**

**ERIN STEELE**

**CATHERINE LANG**

**GEOFF MYNETT**

**DOUGLAS HAMILTON**

**GARRY GOTTFRIEDSON**

**YVONNE BLOMER**

**ELIZABETH RUTH**

**PAULINE LE BEL**

# GUMBOOTS IN THE STRAITS

NAUTICAL ADVENTURES FROM SOINTULA TO THE SALISH SEA

EDITED BY LOU ALLISON & COMPILED BY JANE WILDE

THE GUMBOOT SERIES RETURNS WITH MORE 70S WEST COAST ADVENTURES, THIS TIME IN THE STUNNING AND DELIGHTFUL COMMUNITIES OF VANCOUVER ISLAND AND THE SALISH SEA

Returning to the fascinating 1970s migration of young people to BC's West Coast, *Gumboots in the Straits* gathers more stories of the romance of the sea and the demographic and personal change of that time. As adventurous young men made their way to Vancouver Island and the many other islands scattered throughout the Salish Sea in search of opportunity and new experiences, they discovered paths beyond the reach of roads and new horizons, both physical and metaphorical, where all seemed possible. They learned new skills, faced new challenges, and lived new adventures. Packed with stories of personal transformation, breaking new ground and adapting to the changing tides of life *Gumboots in the Straits* joins bestsellers *Gumboot Girls*, *Dancing in Gumboots* and *Gumboot Guys* in capturing the dynamic momentum of the decade and the enduring allure of the BC Coast.

**LOU ALLISON** moved to the West Coast from Ottawa in the western migration of the 1970s. She settled in Dodge Cove after having children, working all over the North Coast, and living on boats and float houses with her partner, Jeremiah, while completing her English degree by the light of a kerosene lamp. Lou now works full time at the Prince Rupert Library and is devoted to all things related to books. She is the editor of the bestselling anthologies *Gumboot Girls* (2012), *Dancing in Gumboots* (2018) and *Gumboot Guys* (2023) with Jane Wilde.

**JANE WILDE** moved to the West Coast in the early 1970s from Guelph, Ontario. She resided on Haida Gwaii from 1976–79 and, after attending nursing school, returned to Prince Rupert as a maternity nurse. For thirty-five years, Jane worked in health care in rural communities, living in Dodge Cove and Prince Rupert with her partner, Richard. She relocated to the Comox Valley in the fall of 2016.

PHOTO COURTESY JANE WILDE



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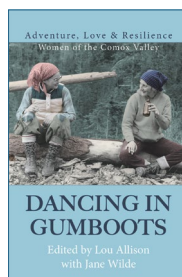
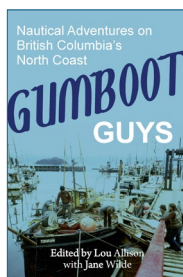
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Also by Lou Allison & Jane Wilde:



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WHERE URBAN MEETS RURAL

# SUNRISE OVER HALF-BUILT HOUSES

## LOVE, LONGING AND ADDICTION IN SUBURBIA

BY ERIN STEELE

LEONE STEELE PHOTO



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ERIN STEELE DELIVERS AN AUTHENTIC, HUMBLE AND ULTIMATELY INSPIRING STORY THROUGH LOVE, ADDICTION AND LEARNING TO FIND PEACE IN THE DARKEST MOMENTS OF LONGING

Erin wants nothing more than to be seen and loved, but she's trapped in a cage of her own shyness. Set in the underbelly of the suburbs of Vancouver in the early 2000s, young Erin develops a confusing and intense crush on a female classmate, sparking desperate bids for attention and setting Erin on a dangerous path in search of fulfilment. When that path leads to hard drugs and the illusion of security and love, there's no turning back.

Anchored by her boyfriend-turned-best-friend and a chorus of pierced, punk friends, Erin lives and loves on the outskirts of real consequence as her world gets smaller and darker. Eventually clawing her way out of the dark depths of rock bottom through running, she finds herself still trapped in cycles of addiction. It's only when consequence eventually hits—and hits hard—that she meets both grief and herself. There, she finally sees everything she's been trying to escape in new light, and her transformation begins.

**ERIN STEELE** is a writer, low-key philosopher and insatiably curious explorer of life. She writes *On Being Human* on Substack, is a 2022 Writing by Writers fellow and has been published in *Human Parts* by Medium. She currently lives in Kelowna, BC, Canada where she practises all limbs of yoga, runs long distances on trails and nerds out on nature—particularly when the arrowleaf balsamroot explodes the hills yellow. *Sunrise Over Half-Built Houses* is her first book.

WHERE URBAN MEETS RURAL

# EMBEDDED

THE IRRECONCILABLE NATURE OF WAR, LOSS AND CONSEQUENCE

BY CATHERINE LANG

AWARD-WINNING WRITER AND FORMER REPORTER CATHERINE LANG WRESTLES WITH THE CONSEQUENCES OF WAR IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE DEATH OF HER NIECE MICHELLE LANG, WHO WAS KILLED WHILE EMBEDDED WITH CANADIAN TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN

When Catherine Lang's niece and *Calgary Herald* reporter Michelle Lang was killed while embedded with Canadian troops near Kandahar City, Afghanistan, in 2009, her world shifted.

In the aftermath, Lang and her family experienced the rigour of military ceremony. As she pieced together fragments from Michelle's last days, Lang connected with the loved ones of soldiers who died alongside Michelle. She met with those injured by the roadside bomb, including the lone civilian woman talking to Michelle at the time of the blast, discovering in her and others a steely resilience to carry on and a more intimate understanding of the meaning of sacrifice. Suddenly thrust close to this aspect of Canadian society, Lang began to question previously held black-and-white views about military engagement. She turned to writing as a way to understand the impact on her and her family, and to ensure that Michelle lived on in memory.

Wrestling with the unfathomable consequence of war, she travels across Canada to learn about Michelle through the eyes of her colleagues and friends. This process brings Lang to Saskatchewan, where she had lived as a child—a homecoming that reveals much to Catherine about Michelle, and about herself. Brought together by a shared love of journalism and dedication to press freedom and to the rights of Afghan women and girls, Lang is led back to writing through her search for Michelle, and back to Michelle through the language of love and loss.

PHOTO COURTESY CATHERINE LANG



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BIOGRAPHY & AUTOBIOGRAPHY  
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CATHERINE LANG worked as a community newspaper reporter and freelance writer at the outset of her writing career in the 1980s. In 1996, she published *O-Bon in Chimunesu: A Community Remembered*, a creative non-fiction work about the former Japanese-Canadian community on Vancouver Island, with Arsenal Pulp Press; *O-Bon* won the Hubert Evans Non-Fiction Prize at the 1997 BC Book Prizes. She later worked as an editor of provincial legislative debates and in treaty negotiations with Indigenous nations in BC. Lang lives in Victoria, BC.

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# A GENTLEMAN OF CONSIDERABLE TALENT

## WILLIAM BROWN AND THE FUR TRADE, 1811–1827

BY GEOFF MYNETT

STEPHEN MYNETT PHOTO



**A GENTLEMAN OF CONSIDERABLE TALENT PRESENTS FASCINATING INSIGHT INTO THE EARLY YEARS OF CANADA'S FUR TRADE, TOLD THROUGH THE LIFE OF HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY TRADER WILLIAM BROWN**

In 1811, twenty-one-year-old William Brown arrived in Rupert's Land from the small Scottish village of Kilmaurs. Employed by the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) during perhaps the most conflict ridden years of British North America's history, Brown set out on the path of the ordinary fur trader. Brown's time with the HBC is marked by hardship and strife: he struggled to survive during long, hard, hungry winters, and the fierce conflict with men of the rival North West Company during the Pemmican War. He found himself embroiled in the churning politics of the time, playing a role in the mutiny on the waters of the Hudson Bay—throughout, Brown showed he had both the brawn and brains to make a difference.

Described by Governor George Simpson as “a zealous gentleman of considerable talent,” Brown would go on to establish Fort Kilmaurs in New Caledonia, now Northern BC, and emerge as a pioneering explorer of the Babine and Bulkley Rivers, fueled by the dream of being the first HBC trader to reach the Pacific Ocean via the Skeena River. While not a powerful figure in his own right, Brown nonetheless left a mark on the development of the nation. Through letters and entries in the HBC journals, he gives us a rich picture of the era. In *A Gentleman of Considerable Talent: William Brown and the Fur Trade*, award-winning historian Geoff Mynett delivers the fascinating story of a Hudson's Bay everyman and the tumultuous conditions of Canada's fur trade.

**GEOFF MYNETT** is a retired lawyer. His first book, *Service on the Skeena: Horace Wrinch, Frontier Physician* (Ronsdale Press, 2019), received a Jeanne Clarke Memorial Award. His recent books, *Pinkerton's and the Hunt for Simon Gunanoot*, *Murders on the Skeena*, *River of Mists*, and *The Eventful Life of Philip Hankin* were published by Caitlin Press; both *Pinkerton's and the Hunt for Simon Gunanoot* and *Murders on the Skeena* appeared on the BC Bestseller List for eight consecutive weeks in 2021. Geoff and his wife, Alice, live in Vancouver, BC, and have two sons.

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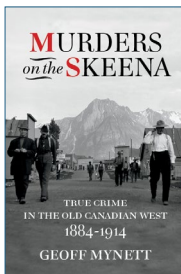
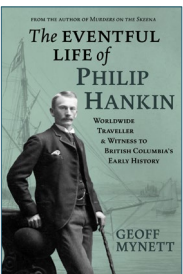
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Also by Geoff Mynett:



# WHO SHOT ESTEVAN LIGHT?

## AND OTHER TALES FROM THE SALISH SEA AND BEYOND

BY DOUGLAS HAMILTON

PIRATES, RUMRUNNERS, MOONSHINE ...  
DOUGLAS HAMILTON DELIVERS AN ECLECTIC  
COLLECTION OF MARITIME STORIES AND FOLKTALES  
FROM IN AND AROUND THE SALISH SEA

In this eclectic collection, *Who Shot Estevan Light?: Tales from the Salish Sea and Beyond*, author Douglas Hamilton shares stories of maritime history and local folklore: The Flying Dutchman, a notorious BC pirate reputed to have been part of Butch Cassidy's gang and who eluded the police only to resurface on Lasqueti Island on the West Coast; a BC lighthouse that was shelled by a Japanese submarine in 1942; an undeservedly little-known French explorer who rivalled Captain Cook in the extent of his travels in the Pacific, and more.

Hamilton introduces us to a band of rumrunners who narrowly escaped police while using speed boats outfitted with WWI aircraft engines, and to the tragic history of the steamship Grappler. He takes us inside a horrendous maritime disaster event exacerbated by racism and greed, and he shares the tale of a Spanish map of "California Island" that looked suspiciously like Vancouver Island at a time when maps were state secrets or deliberate deceptions. As in his previous publication *Accidental Eden*, Hamilton treats the reader to tales of local West Coast folklore, including the perils of moonshine, a mysterious disappearance, and a titillating intergenerational tale. *Who Shot Estevan Light?* offers an enthralling escape into the world of adventure, intrigue and timeless West Coast maritime stories.

**DOUGLAS L. HAMILTON** was born in Washington, DC, and received an MA in history from the University of California, Riverside. In the 1970s he moved to Lasqueti Island where he built a shack made of driftwood on an isolated beach. His stories have appeared in *Pacific Yachting*, *Raincoast Chronicles*, *Canadian West* and *True West*. His book *Sobering Dilemma: A History of Prohibition in British Columbia* was published by Ronsdale Press in 2004. He lived for decades on his property on Lasqueti Island with his partner, her harpsichord, cows and chickens. He now lives in Parksville, BC.



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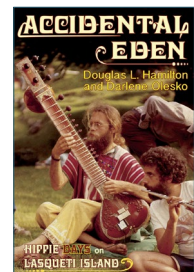
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Also by Douglas Hamilton:



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WHERE URBAN MEETS RURAL

# THE FLESH OF ICE

## POEMS

BY GARRY GOTTFRIEDSON

FARAH NOSH PHOTO



A SEARINGLY HONEST AND DEEPLY HEARTFELT COLLECTION DEDICATED TO THOSE WHO ATTENDED THE KAMLOOPS INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL AND RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS IN CANADA

The Secwépemc term *le estcwiwéy* (the missing) was given by Secwépemc elders who dedicated their knowledge and time to guide the community through the hell they were forced to endure in May 2021. Garry Gottfriedson's *The Flesh of Ice* picks up the thread of his 2021 collection, *Bent Back Tongue*, describing the history and relationship of Indigenous people in Canada with the Canadian government and the Catholic church. Here is the story of those who survived Kamloops Indian Residential School (KIRS), and stories of descendants of KIRS who remembered "the missing" in the wake of the discovery of unmarked graves at the KIRS. Here, in hauntingly visceral poems, are the living conditions, policies and practices of the school itself, the stories of those who lived there, and the names of practitioners of the school, called out and cursed. Lastly, personal stories are given space to reclaim the narrative, taking readers on a journey of resilience, survival, pain and joy.

**GARRY GOTTFRIEDSON** is from Kamloops, BC. He is strongly rooted in his Secwépemc (Shuswap) cultural teachings. He holds a Masters of Education degree from Simon Fraser University. In 1987, the Naropa Institute in Boulder, Colorado, awarded a Creative Writing Scholarship to Gottfriedson for Masters of Fine Arts Creative Writing, where, he studied under Allen Ginsberg and Marianne Faithfull. Gottfriedson achieved an Honorary Doctor of Laws from the University of Northern British Columbia and a Doctor of Letters from Thompson Rivers University. Gottfriedson has thirteen published books, including *Skin Like Mine*, *Clinging to Bone* (Ronsdale Press, 2010; 2019) and, most recently, *Bent Back Tongue* (Caitlin Press, 2022). Gottfriedson's work unapologetically unveils the truth of Canada's treatment of First Nations. His work has been anthologized and published nationally and internationally, with a forthcoming book to be published in Spanish.

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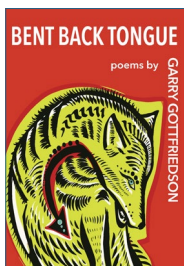
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POETRY / Canadian / Indigenous

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POETRY / Subjects & Themes / Death, Grief, Loss

Also by Garry Gottfriedson:



WHERE URBAN MEETS RURAL

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# DEATH OF PERSEPHONE

## A MURDER

BY YVONNE BLOMER

YVONNE BLOMER DISPLACES THE MYTH OF  
YOUNG PERSEPHONE IN HADES' VIOLENT  
UNDERWORLD, CHALLENGING MODERN CONCEPTS  
OF GODS AND HUMANITY

In *Death of Persephone*, the patriarchal myth of the maiden taken, raped, and made the potent and sexualized queen of the underworld is questioned, altered, flipped. Instead, we have Stephanie, a girl of seven, taken and raised by her Uncle H. who is obsessed by her, tries to control her, to keep her, to have her even as she blooms out from underneath him.

In poems both lyrical and narrative, a woman paints Hecate on a building, a Hyacinth Macaw flies overhead, a detective bumbles from crime to crime. This is a city with a vast underground where bats hang and paperwhites bloom, a city where men still rule.

Who sees what, who will pay, and who will survive in this ancient story altered at the core?

**YVONNE BLOMER** is the author of the critically acclaimed poetry collections *The Last Show on Earth* (Caitlin Press, 2022) and *As if a Raven* (Palimpsest Press, 2015) as well as the travel memoir *Sugar Ride: Cycling from Hanoi to Kuala Lumpur* (Palimpsest Press, 2017). She works as an editor, teacher and mentor in poetry and memoir and served as the city of Victoria poet laureate from 2015–2018. She is the editor of *Refugium: Poems for the Pacific* (Caitlin Press, 2017) the first in a trilogy of water-based poetry anthologies that was followed with *Sweet Water: Poems for the Watershed* (Caitlin Press, 2020). She was the Artistic Director for the weekly Planet Earth Poetry series and edited the anthology *Poems for Planet Earth*, and she recently edited *Hologram: Homage to P.K. Page* (Caitlin Press, 2023). She has been longlisted for the CBC Poetry Prize and shortlisted for the Montreal Poetry Prize and the Troubadour International Poetry Prize and won the Gwendolyn MacEwen Poetry Prize for *Death of Persephone*. Yvonne lives, works and raises her family on the traditional territories of the WSÁNEĆ (Saanich), Lkwungen (Songhees), Wyomilth (Esquimalt) peoples of the Coast Salish Nation.

NANCY YAKIMOSKI PHOTO



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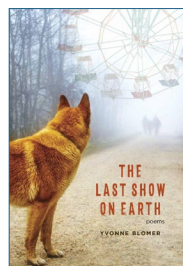
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Also by Yvonne Blomer:



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# THIS REPORT IS STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

## POEMS

BY ELIZABETH RUTH

SAMUEL ENGELKING PHOTO



PART EXPOSÉ, PART MEMOIR, ALL HEART—  
CRITICALLY-ACCLAIMED NOVELIST ELIZABETH  
RUTH'S POETRY DEBUT IS AN ACT OF LOVE AND  
COMMEMORATION, INSPIRED BY REAL LIFE  
EVENTS THAT HAVE LEFT A LASTING IMPRINT ON  
GENERATIONS OF FAMILY

Presented in four linked sections, this debut poetry collection from award winning writer Elizabeth Ruth offers readers rare glimpses into private worlds, revealing the life of the author's aunt who lived for decades in a notorious government-run residential hospital, exploring the experience of critical illness, and addressing the biological father Elizabeth Ruth has never met. With fresh, inventive use of language, biting irony and an unflinching gaze upon the human condition, these intimate poems give voice to the things that can't be said. *This Report Is Strictly Confidential* is an act of literary alchemy that carries all kinds of secrets out of the shadows and into the light, thereby transforming ugliness into beauty.

**ELIZABETH RUTH** is the author of the novels, *Semi-Detached*, *Matadora*, *Smoke*, and *Ten Good Seconds of Silence*. Her work has been recognized by the Writers' Trust of Canada Fiction Prize, the City of Toronto Book Award, the Amazon.ca First Novel Award, and One Book One Community. CBC named her "One of the Ten Canadian Women Writers You Must Read." Ruth is also the author of a plain language novella for adult literacy learners entitled, *Love You to Death*, and editor of the anthology, *Bent on Writing: Contemporary Queer Tales*. She holds a BA in English Literature, an MA in Counselling Psychology, and an MFA in Creative Writing. Elizabeth Ruth teaches creative writing at the University of Toronto. *This Report Is Strictly Confidential* is her debut poetry collection.

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WHERE URBAN MEETS RURAL

# BECOMING THE HARVEST

## POEMS

BY PAULINE LE BEL

WITH PLAYFUL WIT AND LYRICAL STYLE,  
PAULINE LE BEL MEDITATES ON THE GIFT OF AGEING,  
MOVING THROUGH LOSS, AND THE PROCESS OF  
FINDING JOY AND ACCEPTANCE AT THE END OF LIFE

*Becoming the Harvest* invites the reader to contemplate the fierce transformative initiations of ageing and death. Le Bel takes readers through a poignant poetic journey inspired by her intimate experience with the deaths of her loved ones, as well as her acceptance, and often delight, in her own ageing body.

Her end of life education began fifteen years ago when she cared for an older sister diagnosed with a terminal illness. It was a soulful time, an unexpected threshold into the beauty and sorrows of living and dying. She sweetened and sharpened her views on ageing and death, finding hope and nuance amid the stark reality.

With an unflinching and at times playful eye, Le Bel challenges our cultural stories about the end of life, rejecting the merciless stereotype of the Grim Reaper, and pokes gentle fun at our common euphemisms for the end. These are poems to welcome the end years, to claim them, touch them, lightly and deeply, to see ageing and death not as the enemy but as a call to live life more fully, to love more thoughtfully.

**PAULINE LE BEL's** writing has appeared in print, on stage, screen, and in concert halls, nationally and internationally, winning awards for a novel and two screenplays. She has worked professionally as an actor, singer, writer in theatre, film and radio, performing leading roles, and singing the songs of Jacques Brel and The Little Sparrow. She has produced five CDs of her original music, and is the author of four books, most recently, *Whale in The Door*, a critically acclaimed history of Howe Sound, published by Caitlin Press. She is the founder and creative director of Knowing Our Place, a reconciliation initiative on Bowen Island. In her well-attended *Way to Go!* workshops, she calls upon her poetry to open hearts and minds for thoughtful conversation on the end of life.

VIRGINIA PENNY PHOTO



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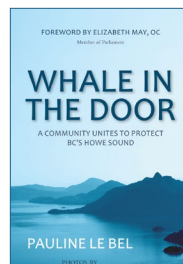
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